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USAID ACEH ROAD PROJECT UPDATE

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Photo: USAID

The reconstructed West Coast Highway will span approximately 243 km, and is expected to be completed by December 2009.



Introduction

The reconstruction of the Banda Aceh West Coast Highway is well under way. The road is the economic backbone of the Aceh region, connecting the province with the rest of North Sumatra and Indonesia. A vital key to improving and safeguarding the future of the region's economic stability, the road will ensure mobility, improve communications and create local jobs, bringing much-needed trade to the tsunami-devastated region.

Construction and Land Acquisition

- In addition to maintaining 80 km of existing road from Banda Aceh to Lamno, the road's contractor, PT. Wijaya Karya, has initiated construction on 5.7 kilometers on a segment approximately 60km south of Banda Aceh.
- Bridge fabrication is underway to replace a damaged Bailey bridge over the Sara River at Leupung, with the help of the Provincial Department of Public Works.
- The Provincial Public Works and the Aceh Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (BRR), which handles right-of-way land acquisition has assisted with the purchase of private land to allow for road construction.
- Land-owners and boundaries affected by the right-of-way continue to be identified. The Road Project community outreach team is assisting BRR and government land acquisition and evaluation teams to determine land values to budget for land acquisition costs.

Environmental Management and Community Outreach

- The Road Project's environmental team and the International Labor Organization (ILO) have established an environmental monitoring internship program that employs four engineering graduates from Syiah Kuala University's Environmental Research Center (ERC).
- The monitors inspected road segments in Meulaboh that are close to the coast and need protection, surveying areas where sand dune channels are proposed to prevent flooding.
- The Road Project's environmental and outreach teams also assessed the impact of road rehabilitation and reconstruction on vital sea turtle habitats and nesting sites along the west coast, close to kilometer 47.
- The community outreach team has reviewed dust and environmental safety issues in Leupung Sub-District and developed an action plan to improve air quality in this area.